WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   A method for updating a computer system for processing a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising the steps of:

comparing a purchase order from a buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from a supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order made by said supplier, said changes including replacing said information with replacement information;

correlating said changes to develop a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information; and

adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

2.   A method in accordance with Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

comparing original information in a line item to a catalog to determine whether said line item is valid; and

in the event that said line item is not valid,

accessing said list of known errors,

mapping said original information to said list of known errors, and

if said original information exists in said list of known errors, replacing said original information with corresponding replacement information from said list of known errors to derive a replacement line item.

3.   A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the step of comparing said purchase order includes the step of comparing information selected from the group consisting of:

supplier identifier;

supplier part number; and

supplier unit of measure.

4.   A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said list of known errors is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

5.   A computer-based system for updating the processing of a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising:

means for comparing a purchase order from a buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from a supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order made by said supplier, said changes including replacing said information with replacement information;

means for correlating said changes and for developing a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information; and

means for adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

6.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 5, further comprising means, responsive to a determination that said line item is not valid, for:

(a) accessing said list of known errors,

(b) mapping said original information to said list of known errors, and

(c) if said original information exists in said list of known errors, for replacing said original information with corresponding replacement information from said list of known errors to derive a replacement line item.

7.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said means for comparing said purchase order is configured to compare information selected from the group consisting of:

supplier identifier;

supplier part number; and

supplier unit of measure.

8.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 5 wherein said means for adding said rule is configured to add said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

9.   A method for updating a catalog of a buyer for use in ordering via an electronic purchase order from said buyer to a supplier, said method comprising the steps

of:

receiving, from said buyer, a selection of a source of information;

receiving, from said buyer, a selection of product information from said source for inclusion in a file for updating said catalog, said selection of product information based on a review of items in said source of information;

generating, based on said selected product information, a file correlating said selected product information with corresponding replacement information from said source of information; and

providing said file for updating said selected product information in said catalog with said corresponding replacement information.

10.   A method in accordance with Claim 9 wherein said product information includes pricing information.

11.   A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing a purchase order from said buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order, said changes including replacing said information with corresponding replacement information.

12.   A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing information in said catalog of said buyer to information in from a catalog of said supplier to determine any differences in said buyer information and said supplier information.

13.   A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a catalog associated with said supplier.

14.   A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a contract agreement associated with said supplier or a third party.

15. A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said step of providing said file includes a step selected from the group consisting of:

automatically updating said catalog with said file;

transmitting said file to said buyer; and

providing said file for download by said buyer.

16. A method in accordance with Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

receiving, from said buyer, a selection of a file format for said file; and

converting said file into said selected file format.

17. A computer-based system for updating a catalog of a buyer for use in ordering via an electronic purchase order from said buyer to a supplier, comprising:

means for receiving, from said buyer, a selection of a source of information;

means for receiving, from said buyer, a selection of product information from said source for inclusion in a file for updating said catalog, said selection of product information based on a review of items in said source of information;

means for generating, based on said selected product information, a file correlating said selected product information with corresponding replacement information from said source of information; and

means for providing said file for updating said selected product information in said catalog with said corresponding replacement information.

18. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said product information includes pricing information.

19. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing a purchase order from said buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order, said changes including replacing said information with corresponding replacement information.

20.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing information in said catalog of said buyer to information in from a catalog of said supplier to determine any differences in said buyer information and said supplier information.

21.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a catalog associated with said supplier.

22.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a contract agreement associated with said supplier or a third party.

23.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said means for providing said file selected from the group consisting of:
    means for automatically updating said catalog with said file;
    means for transmitting said file to said buyer; and
    means for providing said file for download by said buyer.

24.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 17, further comprising:
    means for receiving from said buyer a selection of a file format for said file; and
    means for converting said file into said selected file format.

25.   A method for processing a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising the steps of:
    (a) selecting a line item in said purchase order for validation;
    (b) comparing original information in said line item to a catalog containing items offered by said supplier to determine whether said line item is valid;
    (c) in the event that said line item is not valid,
        (1) accessing a rule specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer;
        (2) refining said original information in accordance with said rule to

derive replacement information for inclusion in a replacement line item;

(d) validating said replacement line item by comparing said replacement information to said catalog to determine whether said replacement line item is valid;

(1) including said replacement line item in a final purchase order to said supplier if said replacement line item is valid;

(2) including said line item containing said original information in said final purchase order if said replacement line item is not valid;

(e) transmitting said final purchase order to said supplier for processing;

(f) receiving a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier;

(g) comparing said final purchase order to said purchase order acknowledgement to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order made by said supplier, said changes including replacing said information with replacement information;

(h) correlating said changes to develop a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information; and

(i) adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

26. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of comparing original information includes the step of comparing original information selected from the group consisting of:

supplier identifier;

supplier part number; and

supplier unit of measure.

27. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of comparing original information includes the step of comparing a part number, and the step of accessing a rule includes a rule selected from the group consisting of:

a rule to remove a specific character from said part number;

a rule to remove a non-alphanumeric character from said part number;

a rule to insert a character in a position in said part number; and

a rule to fill in a leading character in said part number.

28. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of comparing original information includes the step of comparing a part number, and the step of accessing a rule includes a rule selected from the group consisting of:

a rule to truncate said part number if a number of characters in said part number exceeds a predetermined length;

a rule to insert a character in said part number until a number of characters in said part number is a predetermined length; and

a rule to replace a unit of measure with a different unit of measure.

29. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of comparing original information includes the step of comparing original information in said line item to a catalog that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

30. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of accessing a rule includes the step of accessing a rule that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

31. A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the step of correlating said changes to develop a rule includes the step of developing a rule that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

32. A method in accordance with Claim 25, further comprising the step of evaluating said purchase order to determine a trading partner relationship between said supplier and said buyer.

33. A computer-based system for processing a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising:

(a) means for selecting a line item in said purchase order for validation;

(b) means for comparing original information in said line item to a catalog containing items offered by said supplier and for determining whether said line item is valid;

(c) means, responsive to a determination that said line item is not valid, for

accessing a rule specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer; and

refining said original information in accordance with said rule to derive replacement information and for including said replacement information in a replacement line item;

(d) means for comparing said replacement line item to said catalog and for determining whether said replacement line item is valid;

(1) means, responsive to a determination that said replacement line item is valid, for including said replacement line item in a final purchase order to said supplier;

(2) means, responsive to a determination that said replacement line item is not valid, for including said line item containing said original information in said final purchase order;

(e) means for transmitting said final purchase order to said supplier for processing;

(f) means for receiving a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier;

(g) means for comparing said final purchase order to said purchase order acknowledgement and for determining any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order made by said supplier, said changes including replacing said information with replacement information;

(h) means for correlating information in said discrepancy report and for developing a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information; and

(i) means for adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

34.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for comparing original information is configured to compare original information selected from the group consisting of:

supplier identifier;

supplier part number; and

supplier unit of measure.

35. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for comparing original information is configured to compare a part number, and said means for accessing a rule is configured to access a rule selected from the group consisting of:

a rule to remove a specific character from said part number;

a rule to remove a non-alphanumeric character from said part number;

a rule to insert a character in a position in said part number; and

a rule to fill in a leading character in said part number.

36. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for comparing original information is configured to compare a part number, and said means for accessing a rule is configured to access a rule selected from the group consisting of:

a rule to truncate said part number if a number of characters in said part number exceeds a predetermined length;

a rule to insert a character in said part number until a number of characters in said part number is a predetermined length; and

a rule to replace a unit of measure with a different unit of measure.

37. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for comparing original information is configured to compare original information in said line item to a catalog that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer.

38. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for accessing a rule is configured to access a rule that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

39. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, wherein said means for correlating said changes is configured to develop a rule that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and all buyers.

40.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 33, further comprising means for evaluating said purchase order to determine a trading partner relationship between said supplier and said buyer.

41.   A method for processing a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting a line item in said purchase order for validation;

(b) comparing original information in said line item to a catalog containing items offered by said supplier to determine whether said line item is valid;

(c) in the event that said line item is not valid,

(1) accessing a rule specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer;

(2) refining said original information in accordance with said rule to derive replacement information for inclusion in a replacement line item;

(d) validating said replacement line item by comparing said replacement information to said catalog to determine whether said replacement line item is valid;

(e) in the event that said replacement line item is not valid,

(1) suspending said purchase order;

(2) notifying said supplier that said purchase order contains an invalid line item;

(3) allowing said supplier to access said purchase order to correct said invalid line item by replacing original information in said invalid line item with corresponding replacement information;

(4) including a replacement line item containing said replacement information in a final purchase order to said supplier;

(f) developing a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information;

(g) adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer;

(h) receiving, from said buyer, a selection of a source of information;

(i) receiving, from said buyer, a selection of product information from said source for inclusion in a file for updating said catalog, said selection of product information

based on a review of items in said source of information;

(j) generating, based on said selected product information, a file correlating said selected product information with corresponding replacement information from said source of information;

(k) providing said file for updating said selected product information in said catalog with said corresponding replacement information.

42. A method in accordance with Claim 41, further comprising the steps of:

(l) comparing original information in a line item to a catalog to determine whether said line item is valid; and

(m) in the event that said line item is not valid,

(1) accessing said list of known errors,

(2) mapping said original information to said list of known errors, and

(3) if said original information exists in said list of known errors, replacing said original information with corresponding replacement information from said list of known errors to derive a replacement line item;

(n) wherein said steps (l) and (m) are performed prior to said step (b).

43. A method in accordance with Claim 41 wherein said product information includes pricing information.

44. A method in accordance with Claim 41, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing a purchase order from said buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order, said changes including replacing said information with corresponding replacement information.

45. A method in accordance with Claim 41, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing information in said catalog of said buyer to information in from a catalog of said supplier to determine any differences in said buyer information and said supplier information.

46.   A method in accordance with Claim 41, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a catalog associated with said supplier.

47.   A method in accordance with Claim 41, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a contract agreement associated with said supplier or a third party.

48.   A computer-based system for processing a purchase order from a buyer to a supplier, comprising:

(a) means for selecting a line item in said purchase order for validation;

(b) means for comparing original information in said line item to a catalog containing items offered by said supplier and for determining whether said line item is valid;

(c) means, responsive to a determination that said line item is not valid, for

accessing a rule specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer; and

refining said original information in accordance with said rule to derive replacement information for inclusion in a replacement line item;

(d) means for comparing said replacement line item to said catalog and for determining whether said replacement line item is valid;

(e) means, responsive to a determination that said replacement line item is not valid, for:

suspending said purchase order;

notifying said supplier that said purchase order contains an invalid line item;

allowing said supplier to access said purchase order to correct said invalid line item by replacing original information in said invalid line item with corresponding replacement information; and

including a replacement line item containing said replacement information in a final purchase order to said supplier;

(f) means for developing a rule for replacing said information with said replacement information;

(g) means for adding said rule to a list of known errors that is specific to a trading partner relationship including said supplier and said buyer;

(h) means for receiving, from said buyer, a selection of a source of information;

(i) means for receiving, from said buyer, a selection of product information from said source for inclusion in a file for updating said catalog, said selection of product information based on a review of items in said source of information;

(j) means for generating, based on said selected product information, a file correlating said selected product information with corresponding replacement information from said source of information;

(k) means for providing said file to said buyer for updating said selected product information in said catalog with said corresponding replacement information.

49. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48 further comprising means, responsive to a determination that said replacement line item is not valid, for:

accessing said list of known error;

mapping said original information to said list of known errors, and

replacing said original information with corresponding replacement information from said list of known errors to derive a replacement line item, if said original information exists in said list of known errors.

50. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48 wherein said product information includes pricing information.

51. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing a purchase order from said buyer to a purchase order acknowledgement from said supplier to determine any changes to information in a line item of said purchase order, said changes including replacing said information with corresponding replacement information.

52. A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48, wherein said source of information contains discrepancy information created by comparing

information in said catalog of said buyer to information in from a catalog of said supplier to determine any differences in said buyer information and said supplier information.

53.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a catalog associated with said supplier.

54.   A computer-based system in accordance with Claim 48, wherein said source of information is pricing information from a contract agreement associated with said supplier or a third party.